



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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CONTACT: Joseph Donovan, Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

Burmaster leading delegations in Hessen, Germany

Memorandum of Understanding to expand student exchange program to be signed June 22

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster is leading a delegation of education, business, and government leaders on a study tour of Wisconsin's sister state, Hessen, Germany. The delegation's tour coincides with the eighth annual Hessen-Wisconsin Teacher Seminar and the 2005 Hessen state fair, which includes a Wisconsin booth staffed by state high school students.

"I am honored to lead this delegation of explorers. We are travelers who do more than visit, we intend to open our minds and hearts to learn about people and culture, and in learning will be changed," Burmaster said. "We will return to Wisconsin with so much more knowledge and insight and will use this wisdom to serve our students as we share our experiences and broaden the curriculum to include more global perspectives."

The study tour began June 19 with an opening reception for the 2005 Hessen-Wisconsin Sister State International Teacher Seminar, an exchange involving 22 Hessen and Wisconsin teachers. The reception with the state superintendent, Hessen Gov. Roland Koch, Hessen Education Secretary Karin Wolff, seminar teachers, and the Wisconsin delegation was in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Liebigschule, a school in Frankfurt. This is the eighth Hessen-Wisconsin Teacher Seminar since the teacher exchanges began in 1990. With a focus on Exploring Culture through Literature, the 2004-05 exchange brought a group of German teachers to Wisconsin schools and communities last October.

During the June 18 to 25 study tour, the Burmaster delegation will visit the European Space Operations Center, spend time in various schools, and meet with education and government officials from Hessen. The goals for the delegation's visit are to discover

- how the state of Hessen defines the skills necessary for successful participation in the new global economy;
- how Hessen's public schools, vocational schools, and universities teach international skills and knowledge;

(more)

Hessen-Wisconsin study tour

- how Hessen's business and education communities cooperate to prepare young people for work in a global marketplace; and
- how the arts, environment, and tourism contribute to quality of life and economic prosperity in a linguistically and culturally diverse metropolitan region of Germany.

An additional study tour activity will include a visit and reception as part of Hessentag 2005, the annual Hessen state fair being held in Weilburg, a mountainous area about an hour from Frankfurt. Wisconsin will have a booth at the June 17 to 26 Hessentag staffed by students who are studying German in Wisconsin high schools. Verona Chambers, a teacher of German language at Tomah High School, is leading the students. The Hessentag reception, hosted by the Minister President Koch, will be held June 22. It will include the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding that will expand student exchange programs between the sister states.

"During our first International Education Summit held in January, business and education community representatives expressed strong support for Wisconsin's citizens to learn from other cultures through more exchanges, language programs, and internationalized curriculum," Burmaster said. "We look to Germany, with its central location in Europe and frequent contact with citizens from other countries, and are working to model the country's dedication to the importance of understanding other languages and cultures. The question in Wisconsin is no longer, 'Can we afford to offer world languages in our schools?' rather, it is 'Can we afford not to offer these opportunities?'"

Burmaster added that the sister states both face challenges in the global economy. "We both rely heavily on the quality of our workforces for our economic vitality. Thus, we need greater communication between business and education, more specialized training programs, better access to hands-on experiences, and increased sophistication within a diversity of languages, cultures, and working styles to remain successful," she said.

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NOTE: A list of members of the Wisconsin delegation to the Hessen Study Tour, state participants in the 2005 Hessen-Wisconsin Sister State International Teacher Seminar, and students who will staff Wisconsin's booth at Hessentag 2005 follows.

Hessen – Wisconsin Sister State

2004-05 Participants

Hessen-Wisconsin Delegation

Elizabeth Burmaster
State Superintendent

Mary Bell, Library/Media Specialist
Wisconsin Rapids School District
Secretary-Treasurer
Wisconsin Education Association Council

Kathleen Martinsen, District Administrator
Rosholt School District
President
WI Association of School District Administrators

Tom Thompson, D.V.M.
Thompson Animal Medical Center
La Crosse Board of Education
State Superintendent's Parent Leadership Corps

Wendy Wink, Executive Director
Educational Communications Board

Tricia Yates, Sun Prairie
Department of Public Instruction

2004-05 Teacher Seminar

Michael Bartz, German Teacher
Tomah High School

Sarah Bleicher, German Teacher
Parker High School, Janesville

Rebecca Fredericks, English Teacher
New Glarus High School

Kyle Gorden, German Teacher
Elhkorn Area High School

Linda Havas, Milwaukee
German Teacher
Homestead High School, Mequon

Linda Hiland, German Teacher
New Glarus High School

Janine Hoogland, Catawba
English/Journalism Teacher
Ladysmith High School

Linda Kaelin, English/German Teacher
Lourdes High School, Oshkosh

Kathleen McFarland, Lake Geneva
English/Literature Teacher
Elhkorn Area Middle School

Fritz Rauch, Shorewood
English/World Literature Teacher
Homestead High School, Mequon

Carol Schroeder, English Teacher
Parker High School, Janesville

Anne Weber, German Teacher
Sun Prairie High School

Hessentag 2005

Verona Chambers, German Teacher
Tomah High School

Jill Barth, Camp Douglas
Tomah High School

Dustin Damrow
Tomah High School

Ingrid Dirtzu
North High School, Appleton

Andrew Drager, Warrens
Tomah High School

Melissa Debois
Tomah High School

Ryan Fischer
Tomah High School

Eli Judge, Barneveld
Wisconsin Heights High School, Mazomanie

Lucas Kominsky
Tomah High School

Drew Martalock
Tomah High School

Katelyn Vennie
Wisconsin Heights High School, Mazomanie

Margaret Ward
Fond du Lac High School